

June 30, 2005  
Work Session- Budget

Minutes

Members present

D.C. Swaim- Chairman  
Brady Wooten- Vice- Chairman  
Leon Casstevens- Commissioner  
Kim Clark Phillips- Commissioner  
Allen Sneed- Commissioner

Others Present

Cecil E. Wood- County Manager  
Melinda Vestal-Clerk to the Board  
James Graham – County Manager

Chairman Swaim called the recessed meeting to order. Attorney Graham led the invocation. The Board had the pledge.

**\*Commissioner Wooten made the motion to approve the 05-06 budget as presented by Mr. Wood with the following changes: maintain the 68 cents tax rate, employees will not be allowed any pay grade increases, one step increase will be allowed, none if they have received one in the last 120 days, allow any pay increase that is mandated, mid year, longevity, 2% COLA and 401K increases. Spend no money that is not budgeted; get prior approval. On the school issue regarding the \$6 million loan make sure the inter-local agreement is ok with this Board and be sure it is legal and all contracts are in place before we proceed. Commissioner Sneed seconded.**

**Commissioner Casstevens added the following amendment to remove employee 4915 – Services and Development Director.**

Commissioner Phillips asked why?

Commissioner Casstevens stated cost savings and too many mistakes.

Mr. Wood explained the budget amendment regarding the EMS salaries and how it was a clerical error. He would hate to see Mr. Adams lose his job for this reason. Mr. Wood explained the planning and permits reorganization.

Commissioner Phillips asked Commissioner Wooten if this was personal?

Commissioner Wooten stated no and this was not the place or the time to discuss this.

Chairman Swain asked how this would impact that area?

Mr. Wood stated Mr. Adams was over EMS, Animal Control, E-911 budget, Building Codes, Planning & Zoning, Solid Waste and Addressing.

Commissioner Phillips asked what are the plans?

Commissioner Wooten read the following statement: This is a difficult period for our county. As the economy is slow to recover, revenues are stagnating or dwindling and cost are skyrocketing. These issues taken together have made this year's budget one of the most challenging in over a decade. Yet this budget continues to meet priority needs while dealing with the formidable economic impacts. By controlling the spending, having no tax rate increase and balancing the needs for service with the taxpayer's ability to pay for quality government services. Sincere appreciation is extended to department administrators and staff for their extra effort in developing this challenging budget. What the public understands beyond this building is that tax increases make this county a more expensive place to live, work and operate businesses. Discussion of tax increase proposals in this county send a damaging signal to those we should be encouraging to invest in our county. Another bit of reality outside this building, is that our county does not want a tax-increase response to the budget problem. The public is asking elected officials to manage the finances. It is no secret that waste and inefficiency are marbled throughout our county government. The public wants to see hard-earned tax dollars spent more cost effectively. Policy-makers can go a long way toward covering the current budget deficit if they decide to identify and root out low priority, ineffective and excessively bureaucratic waste. What the public understands is that higher taxes do not protect essential services; higher taxes only insulate low-priority, wasteful and ineffective spending. These future appropriations must be reviewed.

Commissioner Phillips stated this budget does not meet the needs of the county and at the public hearing people asked the Board to raise taxes.

Commissioner Wooten stated he made a promise not to raise taxes. He discussed last year's shortfall of \$1.2 million.

Mr. Wood stated there was an over estimation in the revenues last year.

Commissioner Wooten stated next year's budget will be impacted hard with an increase of at least five cents.

Commissioner Phillips asked if the budget is passed how many positions will be eliminated?

Mr. Wood stated the Sheriff has indicated he will cut four positions and others may have to do the same to meet their budget.

Commissioner Phillips stated taxes should be raised at least five cents this year but in reality needs to be higher.

Commissioner Wooten stated the schools are being funded.

Commissioner Phillips stated the loan is being funded but money for expenses has been cut.

The Board discussed salaries.

**The Board voted 3-2. Commissioners Phillips and Swaim opposed.**

### **Insurance**

Mr. Wood presented the proposal from Ireland Insurance regarding property and casualty insurance for the county.

It was the consensus of the Board to accept the proposal from Ireland Insurance.

### **EMS**

General Fund: Services & Development – EMS

Description	Account Number	Original Budget	Increase/(Decrease)	Amend
Salary Full-time	1054330-51030	\$1,097,763.00	\$126,000.00	\$1,223,763.00
Social Security	1054330-51300	\$80,169.00	\$9,068.00	\$89,237.00
Medicare	1054330-51310	\$18,286.00	\$2,603.00	\$20,889.00
Retirement	1054330-51330	\$64,982.00	\$8,540.00	\$73,522.00
401K	1054330-51360	\$10,780.00	\$1,490.00	\$12,270.00
Appropriated Fund Balance	1044000-49000	\$652,000.00	\$147,701.00	\$799,701.00

Budget amendment required for transfer of money to pay EMS salaries under the 2004/2005 fiscal budget year. EMS submitted the budget to the County Manager in May 2004 which included a 5% COLA. The County Commissioners approved a 3% COLA and the new budget was adopted. The approved budget for 2004-2005 was sent to the Personnel Department for corrections. Upon receiving our copy of the revised budget in August 2004, it was discovered that the full time salaries had not been calculated correctly.

**\*Commissioner Sneed made the motion to approve the budget amendment. Commissioner Wooten seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

Mr. Wood asked if the motion included the fire departments.

Commissioner Wooten stated yes.

**Recess**

**\*Commissioner Sneed made the motion to recess until 2:00 at RagApple Lassie.  
Commissioner Wooten seconded. The Board voted 5-0.**

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Melinda Vestal, Clerk to the Board